
Judiciary Committee

HB 2547

Title: An act relating to preventing cruelty to canines.

Brief Description: Preventing cruelty to canines.

Sponsors: Representatives Dunshee, Lantz, Appleton, Moeller, Williams, Eddy, Roberts, Hudgins, Campbell, Nelson, Sullivan, Upthegrove, Chase and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expands the crime of animal fighting to include directing, commanding, or facilitating a canine to injure or kill another canine.• Defines canine to include domestic dogs, coyotes, foxes, and wolves. |
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Hearing Date: 1/18/08

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Animal fighting is an unranked class C felony under the state's animal cruelty laws. "Animal" is defined as dogs or male chickens. A person commits the crime of animal fighting if the person does any of the following:

- owns, possesses, keeps, breeds, trains, buys, sells, or advertises or offers for sale any animal with the intent that the animal will be engaged in an exhibition of animal fighting;
- knowingly promotes, organizes, conducts, participates in, is a spectator of, advertises, prepares, or performs any service in the furtherance of, an exhibition of animal fighting, transports spectators to an animal fight, or provides or serves as a stakeholder for any money wagered on an animal fight;
- keeps or uses any place for the purpose of animal fighting, or manages or accepts payment of admission to any place kept or used for animal fighting;

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- permits any place in the person's possession or control to be occupied, kept, or used for an animal fighting exhibition; or
- takes, leads away, possesses, confines, sells, transfers, or receives a stray animal or a pet animal, with the intent to deprive the owner of the pet animal, and with the intent of using the animal for animal fighting, or for training or baiting for animal fighting.

The animal fighting statute does not prohibit the use of dogs in the management of livestock; the use of dogs in hunting as permitted by law; or the training of animals or the use of equipment in the training of animals. In addition, the animal cruelty laws have a number of exemptions, including: practices authorized under "game laws;" the customary use of animals in rodeos or fairs; licensed research institutions; killing dangerous reptiles; and killing animals for food.

Under the game laws, it is unlawful to hunt black bear, cougar, bobcat, or lynx with the aid of a dog unless authorized by a state or federal agency. The game laws do not prohibit the use of dogs to hunt coyote, foxes, or wolves.

Summary of Bill:

The crime of animal fighting is expanded, and the definition of "animal" is expanded.

A person commits the crime of animal fighting if he or she directs, commands, or facilitates a canine in his or her possession or control to injure or kill another canine. The use of dogs for the management of livestock, the use of dogs in hunting, and the training of animals are not exempt from this form of animal fighting.

The definition of "animal" is expanded to mean "canines." "Canine" is defined as any member of the taxonomical family Canidea, and includes domestic dogs, coyotes, foxes, and wolves.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.